CIRCULAR LETTER.

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THE CHRISTIAN'S DUTY TO GOD AND THE STATE IN THESE TIMES OF NATIONAL TRIAL.

THE BERKSHIRE BAPTIST ASSOCIATION TO THE CHURCHES COMPOSING IT.

DEAR BRETHREN:

We have fallen upon evil times. In the fearful civil strife which has been going on for more than two years, it has come to pass that a large majority of Christians have forgotten their obligations to "endure hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ."* It has also come to pass that many of them, whose love of country ought to be stronger than their love of party, have been doing not a little to cripple the government in its efforts to put down the rebellion, which has drenched the land with blood, and filled its homes with mourning and woe.

If these things are so—and he must have been a careless observer of events, or wilfully blind who has failed to see them—then they ought immediately to cease; and the allegiance which has been withdrawn from God and our common country, no matter what may have been the causes which led to it, should be speedily given back, so that as Christians we may once more be true to Him who has done so much for us, and as patriots true to our country, whose civil and political blessings have been bestowed upon us with a liberal and an open hand.

Last year the subject on which we spoke to you was this: "Some Lessons of Christian Duty toward the State," suggested by our national afflictions. This year we propose to answer *this* question—*What ought to be expected of Christians in these times of national trial?* The subject was not exhausted last year. We addressed you as Christian men with weighty words, and sought to carry home to your convictions, by a variety of arguments, some of the duties you owe to the State. Taking a wider range and occupying a somewhat different stand-point, we desire, this year, not only to reimpress upon your minds the lessons of the hour for the State, but to remind you of that higher loyalty, which, in our nation's day of trial, is due to Him who is above the State, "the King of kings and the Lord of lords."

The question we present for discussion in this, our annual epistle, is properly divisible into two parts: first, the duty of the Christian to God, and secondly, to the State, in these times of national trial.

What, then, ought to be expected of Christians, in their loyalty to God, in the national ordeal through which we are now passing? We answer—They should be holier, more self-sacrificing and prayerful.

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*2 Tim. 2 : 3.

When any danger or evil jeopardizes the existence of anything which is sacred as a principle, or threatens to impair its efficiency as a moral power in the promotion of righteousness, its protection and safety demand increased watchfulness, devotion, and vigor. A good soldier must always be awake to the responsibilities of his position; he must be increasingly so when an attack from the enemy upon his lines is imminent. To sleep on his post is always criminal; it is tenfold more so when the enemy sits down before his lines. The presence, power, and strategy of his foe must be met and hurled back by a presence, power, and strategy which shall be an overmatch for him. As dangers thicken or evils multiply, they must be thwarted by a new vigilance and the mastery of a fresh power which shall make them harmless for mischief.

In a time of national calamity like ours, there is always great danger that the preparations for the conflict, the movements of great armies, the fierce collisions which occur, and the results which flow from disaster, defeat or victory, will so absorb the time, attention and thoughts of those who are Christ's, that the higher claims of the Christian will be momentarily shoved aside by the lower claims of the patriot. This ought not so to be. Loyalty to God and loyalty to the State are not antagonsims. Though moving in separate orbits, they collide nowhere. As parts of a concordant whole they wheel onward to their glorious consummation, singing harmoniously as the music of the spheres this great law, which was enunciated by the Master himself, " Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's,"*—a law that has swept down the centuries, and been chanted by Christian patriots every where and at all times. Yet it is always more or less true that the material present, whether of our own personal interests or those of the State, if it is in danger, is apt to crowd out the spiritual claims of the gospel, and thus virtually to make them antagonisms. This, unfortunately for the spirituality of Christ's disciples, has been the case with large multitudes of Christians in our country ever since the first gun of the rebellion was fired at Sumter. The sad process has been going on with constantly increasing power until it has become a spiritual paralysis, which has dulled the sensibilities of American Christians, and so shorn them of their strength that they are becoming weak like other men. Instead of leading them nearer to Christ, and making them more holy, self-sacrificing and prayerful, by showing them how entirely their sufficiency is of God, this wicked rebellion, with its smoke rising up from a hundred battle-fields, and its thunder shaking the land like an earthquake, has been the cause of a very general withdrawal of the fidelity of Christians from God, and superinduced, in reference to their duties as soldiers of Christ, a most unwarrantable and criminal carelessness. The effects of this have been every way disastrous. Many of the guards at the outposts, where the danger is the greatest, have fallen asleep; and from picket and camp many have either gone into the world on furloughs of their own granting, or have deserted outright. Such a state of things has thinned down the lines of battle to the last point of weakness, or, worse still, has opened ugly gaps where there *should* have been invincible battalions, compact, courageous, and always ready for the spiritual conflict. The arch enemy of God and man has taken advantage of this, and, rushing in like a flood, has done incalculable mischief to the armies of the living God.

Now, dear brethren, we cannot see why you, or your fellow-disciples, should be any the less earnest and devoted Christians because your imperilled citizenship and the peculiar times on which you have fallen, demand a greater measure of active and effective patriotism. The converse of the

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* Matt. 22 : 21.

proposition is rather the truth. The exigencies of your position, both as Christians and patriots, clearly require that you should be more of both; and that the fires which burn on the altars of the closet, the family, and the church, and those which burn on the altars of your patriotism, should become brighter in their glow and intenser in their heat. Indeed, if there ever was a time in our national history when the necessities of the case pressed with greater urgency upon Christians, requiring them to be more holy, self-sacrificing and prayerful, that time is the present. A single reflection will make this abundantly clear. Christianity is the Saviour of the soul and the Preserver of the State. It plucks one as a brand from the burning, and confers upon it eternal life, a boon whose value language fails adequately to estimate. For the other, it educes order from confusion; it holds in check the lawless; it conserves the private and public morals of the people. As the grand agency in the accomplishment of both these results, Christians, through their want of fidelity to "the Captain of [their] salvation,"* are abridging the power of Christianity in both of these directions. We need hardly say how differently this ought to be; nor with what purity, zeal, and consecration Christians, who are the human instruments for the diffusion of Christianity and the earthly representatives of its divine principles, should give themselves to its responsibilities and duties. They are the only exponents of Christianity of which men have any knowledge. And just as they are true or false to its doctrines and precepts will men judge of its claims, truths, obligations, and duties, and allow them to influence their lives and their conduct.

Instead, therefore, of permitting the fires of your devotion to Christianity to go down, and go out into spiritual darkness, they ought to be constantly replenished and kept alive, that they may give light and heat to the spiritually benighted and benumbed, and diffuse their enlightening and purifying influences through the State. As the soldiers of King Jesus, your conflict is with an enemy who is clad in the panoply of hell and triple-headed—the world, the flesh, and the devil. The leader of the host which is marshalled against you seceded from heaven more than six thousand years ago, because, like our latter-day secessionists, whose motto is "rule or ruin," he could not reign there supreme; and being cast out for his wicked rebellion, he set up the confederacy of darkness, and for all these centuries he has sought to overthrow the kingdom of light, and, like our modern secessionists, in the sorceries they have practised upon the citizens of the Republic, he has sought to seduce from their loyalty and fidelity the citizens of that kingdom who have their "conversation in heaven."† How clearly and strongly, therefore, does all this show that Christians, so far from being less holy, less self-sacrificing, and less prayerful, should be more so.

And here is another argument, proving that Christians should be more holy, self-sacrificing, and prayerful in these times of national trial, which is this: suffering and calamity, when men look to God for support to bear them, become at once the means of evoking from their souls all those stronger virtues and graces which our common life never develops. These virtues and graces give to the soul an especial preparation to grapple with its spiritual enemies and overcome them. "The Captain of [your] salvation [was made] perfect through suffering."‡ And so, to a less extent, is

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* Heb. 2 : 10.

† Phil. 3 : 20. The word πολίτευμα, here rendered "conversation," means citizenship or community, and thus declares that Christians belong to the heavenly commonwealth or kingdom which Christ has established here, and which he will gloriously consummate in the Jerusalem above.

‡ Heb. 2 : 10.

the same thing true of all those Christians who permit suffering, whether personal or national, to accomplish in their souls the grand mission it is fitted to perform. The greatest trials have always made the devoted Christian's heart holier and his life nobler. Indeed, it is such trials which prepare the Christian for that special and intimate communion with the Lord Jesus Christ, which it is their mission alone to give. Moreover, trials develop those sterner qualities of character which could never exist without them.

In the old feudal times, there was a baron who stretched a heavy wire between two lofty towers of his castle. When the soft winds of heaven breathed on it, it was silent and unmoved. But when the fierce winds broke against it, it quivered to the blast, and its vibrations gave forth a wild music, whose heavy bass mingled and blended with the yet wilder music of the storm. So it *ought* to be, in the times of personal and national trial with those heavier and stronger chords which God has stretched between the pillars of the soul; and so it *is* with those which belong to the souls of the tried and prayerful servants of Christ. The winds of common life are too feeble to set these chords of the Christian's soul to music. Their vibrations, if any, are too little to waken those tones which affect the heart; and their whisperings, if any, are inaudible to the ear. But when the softer winds of life become the hurricane, and its zephyrs swell into tempests, how these strained and trembling chords of the soul carry to the ear and impress upon the heart of every listener, the invincible determination, the lofty purpose, the mighty faith, and the persistent endurance which can "suffer on and suffer ever." And how the music which quivers along these chords blends itself with the shouts and songs of the old martyrs, who were enveloped in the storms of fire, proclaiming that the stern virtues, unblenching courage, and triumphant faith which lived in their souls and bore them up to heaven, were born of the storm, and were, therefore, not myths, but facts, not dreams, but realities. Indeed, the tempestuous music which suffering evokes from such souls, tells to the world that while they have *bent* to the blast, they have met it like men who have trusted in God, and been made strong by His Mighty Power.

So it should be now. Instead of trying, as many are doing, to untie and take down these stronger and heavier chords which God has drawn along the soul, and which He made on purpose to give music in the time of trials, when the storm is upon us, we should simply leave them where God has placed them, for when the tempests blow on them, their divine music, like "songs in the night," shall inspire with a joy and a confidence which are not of earth, those who are disheartened by spiritual depression or national gloom, and give to them the victory of an overcoming faith, so that they themselves shall sing in view of the results, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea * * * God is in the midst of us [us]; [we] shall not be moved; God shall help [us], and that right early."*

If national airs stir patriots with a new inspiration, when peace is on the land, and arouse them to deeds of martial daring, when the grip of the foe is on their throats, surely the divine music which breaks from the chords of the devoted Christian's soul, when the storms of suffering and trial sweep across them, ought to give faith, strength, courage, boldness, celerity, and, finally, victory to all the soldiers of Christ. If the wild and maddening tones of the "Marseillaise" roused Frenchmen "to arms;" if the "Ranz des Vaches," which have long echoed among the valleys and mountains of

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* Ps. 46 : 7, 2, 35.

the Swiss Alps, gave the Swiss soldiers who were in the French armies such an unconquerable longing for their homes that they either deserted or died, so that the bands were finally forbidden to play them on "pain of death;"* if the "Star Spangled Banner" and the "Battle-Cry of Freedom" make the American soldier grasp tighter the staff which bears the old flag amid the smoke and clangor of battle, and shake it more defiantly in the face of his foes;† then, beyond all question, should the music of faith, strength, and joy, which suffering and trial bring forth from the souls of earnest and loyal Christians, call the dispirited and careless soldiers of Jesus to arms, and lead them to follow the Banner of the Cross into the very thickest of the spiritual conflict. Personal experience and the promises of God both show that, with the afflatus of such a music on the hosts of the living God, the result shall certainly be victory. Like the songs which Paul and Silas sung in the Philippian jail, at midnight, when the doors were opened and they were brought out, the power of the songs which come from *devout* Christians, in the midnight of their sufferings and trials, and their country's, will unbar the doors of many an imprisoned soul, and bring it out into the light of the divine presence. These songs will inspire the soldiers of Christ to fresh efforts. They will bring wandering prodigals to themselves. They will persuade them to desert the armies of Satan, and hasten them to the home of the wanderers from God, the spiritual New Jerusalem, where they will become "good soldiers" in the armies of God.

Moreover, these songs which are thus born of sufferings and trials, and that themselves give birth to all this wealth of rarest virtue and hope in Christ, often impart to the disheartened soldiers of the Cross an unconquerable longing, such as no "Ranz des Vaches" could inspire, for that heavenly home, where there is no affliction, no hunger, no thirst, no night, no conflict, but where, in valleys lighted forever with the Sun of Righteousness, the Christian shall be permitted to walk in peace, and look with joy on the "Delectable Mountains," whose tops shall be eternally bathed in the same blessed light. No wonder that these songs often create such a longing for heaven; for, while they chant the victories which grace has wrought in the past, they rehearse the blessedness, purity, and glory of the heaven which is to come, so that, mingling with them, the true Christian, with his ear opened in that direction,

> "——— hears at morn and even,
> At noon and midnight hour,
> The choral harmonies of heaven
> Seraphic music pour,"‡

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* These national airs of the Swiss are executed on the bagpipe and Alpine horn. Their sounds "are expressive of the scenes and business of pastoral life: the hut, the roaring torrent, the bellowing of the cattle, and the tinkling of the bells which are suspended from their necks; and the associations which they thus recall to the minds of the natives when they are in foreign countries, often produce an unconquerable longing for home. * * * Rosseau relates that the Ranz des Vaches were so dear to the Swiss in the French armies that the bands were forbidden, under pain of death, to play them to the troops, as they immediately drew tears from them, and made those who heard them desert or die of what is called *la maladie du pays*, so ardent a desire did it incite in them to return to their native country."—*Moore's Encyclopedia of Music*, p. 789.

† The author will never forget the effect which martial music produced on himself and thousands of others of the Burnside fleet, when it lay anchored in the Neuse, the last night but one before the Battle of Newbern. Several national airs were sung, in which thousands joined. Some of these airs were played by the regimental bands, and with great skill and power, especially by Gilmore's Band of the 24th Massachusetts. *Encore* after *encore* told how our hearts were stirred, and how the fires of patriotism burned, like blazing *bivouacs*, along our souls. I really believe that, with ths potent spell which was upon the soldiers, they could, if at that moment they had been before the enemy's works, have charged through his *abatis*, leaped his ditches, and scaled his parapets, though to have done so one half of their number might have gone down in the leaden tempest.

‡ Montgomery's "Home in Heaven."

and he has an irrepressible and unconquerable desire to be there, so soon as it shall please God to administer to him "an entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."*

This desire for heaven fits the Christian for the conflicts of earth. And since it has been so arranged that trials and sufferings, when they play on the strained and trembling chords of the soul, shall, if rightly understood, give him more faith, vigor, boldness, efficiency, and consecration to God, it is plain, therefore, that *every* Christian, in these times of national calamity and darkness, *ought* to be holier, more self-sacrificing and prayerful; and that, if he takes the right view, either of his own sufferings and trials or his country's, he *will* be.

The next inquiry which arises is, *What ought to be expected of Christians toward the State, in these times of national trial? Or, in other words, What do Christians owe to the State, in the trying ordeal through which as a nation we are passing?*

This is certainly a most important question. The existence of the mightest republic of the world is at stake. Traitors in the South have clutched the bloody die, traitors in the North are steadying their hands for the final throw, so that the game, if possible, shall surely be theirs. Clouds cover the national sky, and a bloody rain is falling which is flooding the land. Everywhere within the limits of the Confederacy the conflict rages fiercely. The roar of arms is heard in the Border States, and along the Father of Waters and his tributaries, and it meets and mingles with the thunders of the strife, as they sweep through the gorges and down the slopes of the Alleghanies, and shake the Atlantic coast and the shores of the Gulf, from Fort Monroe to Galveston Bay. The gravity and magnitude of this question of Christian patriotism, in its relation to our imperilled country, can hardly, therefore, be overestimated.

The first thing about which you will naturally ask is, *What is Christian patriotism?* And as it is this which, as we conceive, underlies your duty to the State, and is, in fact, its very foundation, this question is one of great significance in determining the elements of that service you ought to render your country in these times of national trial.

True patriotism, whose all-comprehending element is the love of one's country, is not the bigoted love of the Jew, which led him, in the later times of the theocracy, and even after he had become a vassal to imperial Rome, to hate every other nation as accursed of God, and to refuse to do them the smallest acts of kindness. Nor is it the proud love of the Greeks, which branded the rest of the world as ignorant barbarians. Nor is it the selfish love that filled the Roman heart, and stimulated the Cæsars to aim at the enslavement of the world. Nor is it that fiery passion of ambitious love, which seeks to destroy other nations, that it may add to the false glory of its own. Nor is it such a love of country as would sacrifice the inalienable rights of a part of its people to the grasping avarice of another part, and thus become the friend and patron of slavery. A *manly* and *Christian* patriotism, in these times, can neither be the *friend* nor *apologist* of slavery. In fact, the whole genius and spirit of Christianity are averse to all these false and pernicious patriotisms.

Gisborne says, "Patriotism is that Christian love which, while it respects as sacred the rights and welfare of every land, teaches us to manifest, within the limits of justice, special affection to our own country."† No better definition, it seems to us, could have been given. A patriotism

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*2 Pet. 1 : 11.

† Gisborne's Sermons on Christian Morality, p. 260.

which loves one's country, but never contravenes the principles of justice, is clearly the only patriotism which Christianity can sanction, or that is worthy of the name. The immortal lines of James T. Fields present this glorious virtue in its true light:

> "Our country first, [our] glory and [our] pride,
> Land of [our] hopes, land where [our] fathers died,
> When in the right, [we]'ll keep thy honor bright,
> When in the wrong, [we]'ll die to set it right."

The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments present us with a number of instances of genuine patriotism.

David was a patriot. Becoming king of Israel at a time when the kingdom had been greatly weakened by the civil dissensions among the tribes, it required no little skill to effect their cure. After much labor and many efforts, he succeeded, and finally compacted them into a strong and flourishing kingdom. He reverently bowed to the law of God; and, by his influence as a patriot and his authority as a monarch, he preserved among his people the idea and worship of the true God. As the sweet singer of Israel, his psalms contain many expressions which show the strong love he had for his country. He sought on every occasion and in every possible way to promote its interests, and so proved himself to be a patriot in the truest sense.

Solomon, his son, who succeeded him, was also a patriot. His love for Israel was seen in all his public acts. He built a temple, "the noblest pile that ever pressed the earth," not only for the worship of God, but because he was a patriot, and sought the welfare of his subjects.

The prophets, also, were patriots. There was Isaiah, who, while he sternly and severely rebuked the people of Judah, loved them as only a noble patriot could. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, in the passionate lamentations he poured out over the ruin of Jerusalem, exhibits a strength and purity of patriotism seldom equalled. "Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people,"* was an outburst of grief, revealing his patriotism in the strongest light.

Daniel, as a captive in Babylon, though greatly honored by its court, always preserved his saintly and patriotic love for the altars of Israel. As true patriots as he, were Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Habakkuk, and others of the lesser prophets.

The Jews were patriots in the palmier and purer days of their national life. The strength and fervor of their patriotism are seen in the plaintive strains they poured forth when they were captives in Babylon. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."† Paul was a patriot. For while as a Christian he sought the spiritual welfare of the Gentiles, he had an especial love for the Jews, his own people. In writing to the saints at Rome, who were Gentiles as well as Jews, he says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for *Israel* is, that they might be saved.‡ * * * For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for *my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh.*"§ And, finally, as the crowning glory of all these instances of patriotic devotion to country and kin, we have the patriotism of the Saviour himself, which, in depth and fervency, surpasses them all. He risks his life twice for the salvation of his countrymen, the Nazarenes, with whom he had been brought up. He labored to bestow eternal life upon his Jewish brethren, who bitterly persecuted him during his whole ministry; and, finally, just on the eve of his betrayal

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* Lam. 3 : 48. † Ps. 137 : 1, 5, 6. ‡ Rom. 10 : 1. § Rom. 9 : 3.

and crucifixion, when standing upon Olivet and looking down upon the doomed city, he exclaimed with a heart rent with anguish, and filled with patriotism and love, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."*

Such being the recorded patriotism which the Bible approves, we come now to the question, *What should be expected of Christian patriots in these times of national trial?* Plainly, if it is the duty of an enlightened and Christian patriotism to love our country when peace twines her chaplet and waves her magic wand over the land, it becomes doubly a duty when mercenary despots seek to despoil it of its glory, or traitorous hands are lifted up to pluck the civic stars from the national sky.

It is clear, therefore, to us that the noblest passion and the divinest virtue which the Christian citizen of the Republic can exhibit in this, the time of our nation's trials and perils, is that patriotism which, by pen, or tongue, or influence, or money, or sword, employs its energies in maintaining the institutions of the government, and putting down the rebellion, which, in the spirit of hell, is aiming at nothing less than the destruction of the entire superstructure of the government itself.

But, *How shall the Christian show his patriotism?* We answer,

1. *That, "first of all," he must offer up "supplications, prayers, and intercessions for all that are in authority."*† Our rulers need wisdom to direct them at all times, but especially do they need it when the responsibilities of a nation in its death throes are upon them. Cease not, therefore, dear brethren, to offer up continual prayer and fervent supplication on their behalf, that they may rule in the fear of God, and be guided in the ways of righteousness, to do that which is pleasing in his sight.

2. *The Christian must show his patriotism by scouting that false patriotism which makes a distinction, in these times of national trial, between the government and the administration, and claims, on that ground, that it may rightly oppose the latter and be true to the former.*

Now while it is true that there is a distinction between the government and its administration, in the sense that the former includes every exercise of authority embraced in the threefold character of its executive, legislative, and judicial functions, and the latter only that exercise of authority which puts the laws in force; yet this distinction is really applicable only to a state of peace. In the times of civil war it is different. Then the administration of the government is practically the government itself. Whatever destroys confidence in the administration, or impairs its efficiency, does injury to the government, and, so far as it goes, does so much towards its destruction. If the rebels who are in arms could destroy the existing administration to-day, they would, by that very act, destroy the government to-day. When an administration loses its lease of power through the ballot box, it is replaced by another constitutional administration, and the government moves on as before. When it is destroyed by the bayonets of armed traitors, the government itself is destroyed. Whoever, therefore, in these times of national trial, cripples the administration in the prosecution of the war for the suppression of the rebellion, so far withdraws his support from the government, and helps treason endanger its existence. And there can be no worse crime against society or the State than treason. Indeed, it is worse than any other, if its enormity is to be measured by the mischiefs it produces. "On this principle," says the eloquent Gibbon, "the most daring attack on the life and property of the private citizen is

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* Matt. 23 : 37. † 1 Tim. 2 : 12.

judged less atrocious than the crime of treason or rebellion."* The man who, in these times of civil war, seeks to embarrass the administration, and shake confidence in it by his personal influence, his pen, or his speech, commits *moral* treason, and so gives aid to *overt* treason. His patriotism is, therefore, false, and ought to be scouted by every Christian patriot.

In the Revolutionary war, none but tories made distinctions between the administration and the government. The men who were clothed with authority to carry on the government were regarded as the government itself. So it should be now. None but tories proposed to disband the continental armies, and sue for peace on any terms. None but tories now propose to call home our soldiers, and are for peace on any terms. And they, virtually, ask the government to abdicate its authority and go out of existence. Their pretended patriotism is, therefore, plainly spurious, and should be denied all sympathy by those who love our Lord Jesus Christ, and desire the welfare of the country.

And there is another phase of this false patriotism, which is full of mischief to the perpetuity and stability of our common country. It is that mistaken, nay, criminal tenderness, which speaks softly, nay, half approvingly, of those engaged in treasonable conspiracies for the overthrow of the government, and then swells into malignant bitterness and severity against those who are trying to save it. Strange that men who have breathed the free air of these old valleys and hills, can so far forget what is due to their country. Strange that when the rebellion has unleashed its dogs of war, and bid them tear open the national throat, and worry and devour the divine genius of Liberty, that any one could make the mistake that these dogs are only frolicsome lambs. To this phase of false patriotism we exhort you to deny all sympathy, as to the others.

3. *The Christian must show his patriotism by carrying out his Christian principles into all his relations to the State.* As a private citizen, or the holder of civil trusts; as a politician casting his vote, or a soldier wielding the sword, he is to be true to his country, and to do all he does for the State, in the fear of God. In other words, he ought to be as much under the control of the principles of the gospel, in his relations to the State, as in his relations to the family or the church.

Especially would we urge upon you, dear brethren, the duty of carrying your religion into your politics. While we deprecate, as every way pernicious, the too prevalent practice of carrying politics into religion, we feel that we cannot too strongly press upon you the importance of carrying religion into politics. The difference between the two is very great. To carry politics into religion is to subordinate the latter to the former; to give that which is liable to venality, corruption, and fraud, control over that which, like God, is always pure, holy and true. And this is just what multitudes, of all parties, of the partizan politicians of this country, have been doing for more than a quarter of a century. While they have decided that neither ministers nor churches shall discuss questions of politico-humanity, nor the relation of the Christian to the government, claiming that religion has nothing to do with either of these questions, they have done, having ignored the control of religion over their own politics, what it might naturally be expected they would do, adopted for themselves and others this pestiferous sentiment, that "All is fair in politics." We need not tell you how fearfully this doctrine has corrupted the principles and practices of the political parties of the day. Under the plea that religion has nothing to do with the science of government, politicians and parties controlled by them, have reduced the politics of the country to a mere sys-

* Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. XV, p. 377.

tem of bargain and sale, which buys and sells votes at elections and in legislative bodies, as stockholders buy and sell stocks in the market. Many a Christian has consented to do things because party interests required them, which were crimes of the most degraded character, or, which is nearly as bad, to vote for those he knew would do them. But he did them *only as a politician*, he says. Just as if he is not just as much bound to be righteous as a politician as he is as a man and a Christian. However *he* may reason, *God* makes no such distinctions. He cannot avail himself, in the day of judgment, of the plea of the bishop, who said that he did certain wrong things as a bishop and not as a man. "And, please your reverence," he was asked, "when God punishes the bishop what will become of the man?" And so when God punishes these wicked politicians, they will find that *as men* they will hardly escape responsibility. We know that men who are so wedded to party that they will follow it through all the sloughs of corruption, will scout this doctrine as utterly impracticable. In the present condition of party politics, it undoubtedly is, but that makes it no less true and no less a duty for the Christian patriot. Corrupt politicians may scout it with a sneer sufficiently malignant to have secured them good cheer and fellowship among the magnates of Sodom and Gomorrah, if they had lived in those old times; it is, nevertheless, the truth, and will continue to be.

4. *The Christian must show his patriotism by doing all he can to aid the government in overthrowing the rebellion.* The rebellion came into existence without any justifiable cause. Venal politicians may disguise and explain it as they please, the only reason why the slaveholding Confederacy is in rebellion to-day is, that it may spread, unquestioned and unopposed, the effete and barbarous system of slavery over the virgin soil of the new territories of the Republic, and create at home a mart where, unmolested, it may trade in the bodies and souls of men, and separate with impunity husbands and wives, those whose separation God has absolutely forbidden, save for one cause. These are the *real* reasons for the rebellion.

Existing for these purposes, its whole progress has been marked, naturally and inevitably, by peculiar atrocities; and in compassing its diabolical ends it, is to-day, as it has been for more than two years, seeking to destroy the best government of the world, which, though sometimes mistakenly administered, and at others corruptly, has, nevertheless, given quiet to the hearthstones of American homes for more than seventy years, guarantied to our fathers and to us those religious rights and privileges which have made us a mighty people, and, like a flaming sword, has turned every way to keep the tree of liberty. To destroy all this, this rebellion has drawn the sword from its scabbard, and filled the sluiceways of death with blood; and, gloating over what it has already done, it fiendishly leaps forward to reach, if it can, the goal of its terrible designs.

For such a rebellion you are not only to have no fellowship, to utter no word of approval, and make no comparisons which are to inure to its benefit; but you are to help the government in all the possible ways of word and act to destroy it.

Finally, to be all that you ought to be as Christians and patriots, so that you may be fitted to do your whole duty in both relations, you must give yourselves anew to God and your country. The calamities and sufferings through which the Christians of this nation are passing, will, if connected with an unfaltering trust in God, give birth to a mighty faith and a divine strength. With these, they can stand and defy the storm in its fury, or, rising above it, and riding upon the wings of the tempest, they can look on the calm heavens, and thank God and take courage.

Let Christians, therefore, do their duty as Christians—watch, pray, and enter not into temptation; let them "work out [their] own salvation with fear and trembling, [while] God worketh in [them], both to will and to do

of his good pleasure;"* let them labor for the subjugation of rebellious souls to the dominion and authority of the Lord of Hosts; and He shall turn "again the captivity of Zion," and bring her wandering children back "with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."† And, surveying the results of their terminated captivity, and their reinstatement in Zion, they shall feel pressing upon them, like an atmosphere of light, the presence of the Lord; and saved from the taunts of their enemies, who now say to them as "captives in a strange land," "Sing us one of the songs of Zion;"‡ the returning hosts shall then sing a song whose burden and refrain shall be this: "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."§

As patriots let Christians do their duty as patriots. Let them learn, that, if they would be masters of the situation, frustrating the purposes of their nation's enemies, within and without, and thus thoroughly and effectively prevail against the uncircumcised hosts of the bloody Amalek who has come up against them, they must look to God and trust in Him for the victory. And though sometimes we may be weaker than our enemies, that Napoleonic atheism which the "Little Corporal" enunciated, that he had noticed that the heaviest battalions always won the day, will be reversed as sure as God reigns in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. With such a trust in God and the power it gives pervading the patriotic hearts of the Christians of this nation, the final victory will not be far off. God is mightier and swifter than armed hosts; and when He breathes on the proud Sennacheribs, who would pull down the best government on earth, that they may build in its place one whose foundation, temple, and topstone are oppression and slavery, for their temerity and treason they shall lie along the earth in heaps.

While, dear brethren, we call upon you to give to the government a full, cordial, and effective support, we do not mean that you should cover up its mistakes. It will be perfectly right to seek their correction by a just and manly criticism. Such a criticism, instead of destroying, saves; instead of impairing confidence, strengthens it, and is compatible, therefore, with the highest patriotism. But that snarling, morose criticism, which claims that all the talent, bravery, and courage, or nearly so, is with the armed traitors, weakens the popular faith in the integrity and ability of tried military commanders and devoted statesmen, and means to do it, avoid as you would the pestilence itself. It is full of mischief to the existence, unity, and glory of the Republic every way.

Moreover, let us exhort you to do your part toward filling the thinned ranks of our armies, by prompt enlistments or an acquiescing conscription; and "this cruel war will soon be over." Our subdued and penitent foes shall come with grounded arms, and bearing in their hands the olive branch of peace, which loyal millions will hasten to receive. The troubled sky, which has rained its bloody showers, shall once more wear its own hues; and God himself shall set the bow of peace on the clouds of the departing storm, a guaranty and a pledge that war between brethren shall be no more. The river of peace, with its clear waters, shall flow through our valleys and plains, widening as it runs, giving verdure to the banks and greenness to the pastures. Then, from the slopes of every mountain range and the burdened fields of every broad interval, the songs and shouts of rejoicing millions in confluent harmonies, and unbroken by the groans of a single slave, shall burst out in the hallelujahs of a universal freedom—freedom in Christ, and freedom in the State—freedom to-day, and freedom forever. And these hallelujahs shall roll onward like the sound of many waters, until, caught up by the listening nations and prolonged, they shall finally come back from earth and sky, the fulfilment of ancient prophecy, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever."‖

OFFICERS

OF THE

Berkshire Baptist Sabbath School Convention.

PRESIDENT:

Hon. LANSING J. COLE, Cheshire.

VICE-PRESIDENTS:

Dea. J. FRANCIS, Pittsfield; Dea. J. R. LAWTON, Great Barrington.

SECRETARY:

Rev. MILES SANFORD, North Adams.

TREASURER:

S. T. WHIPPLE, Lanesboro'.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Revs. H. A. MORGAN, J. V. LENTELL, J. H. KENT.

CONSTITUTION.

Article 1. This Society shall be known by the name of the Berkshire Baptist Sabbath School Convention.

Art. 2. The great object of this Convention shall be to promote, by every practicable means, the Sabbath School cause within the bounds of the Berkshire Baptist Association.

Art. 3. This Convention shall be composed of Pastors of Churches and Superintendents and Delegates from the several Sabbath Schools connected with the Berkshire Baptist Association.

Art. 4. The Convention shall elect annually a President, two Vice Presidents, a Secretary and Treasurer, who, together with three other members, shall constitute a quorum; these officers to continue in office till their successors are chosen.

Art. 5. There shall be an annual meeting of this Convention held at such place as shall have been previously designated, on the third Wednesday in June, at ten o'clock A. M., when the reports of the Secretary and Treasurer shall be presented, the officers chosen, and appropriate business transacted.

Art. 6. This Constitution may be amended at any annual meeting, with the concurrence of two-thirds of the members present.